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SUBJECT: UK SHARES USG CONCERNS RE ISO 26000 DRAFT

REFTEL: SECSTATE 55239

Summary

¶1. The UK shares the concerns outlined in the reftel non-paper. They have just received a new working draft 4.2 of ISO 26000. It has not yet been reviewed by the government or discussed with the UK ISO Working Group, but it appears to raise the same concerns as the prior draft. This is the draft that will be discussed at the next ISO meeting in Santiago, Chile next September. We delivered the non-paper to contacts in the Foreign and Commercial Office (FCO), the Department for International Development (DIFID), and the department for Business, Enterprise, and Regulatory Reform (BERR). BERR is the lead UK agency regarding ISO 26000 and Tony Pedrotti, Director - Sustainable Development & Regulation Directorate at BERR outlined the above UK government position to Econoff. Pedrotti said he will contact the USG ISO representative in Santiago to discuss the common U.S. and UK concerns raised by the ISO 26000 working draft. END SUMMARY

¶2. The government member of the UKWG is Tony Pedrotti, Director, Sustainable Development & Regulation Directorate at BERR. We gave the non-paper to Pedrotti on June 2 and he gave his comments on June 11. Pedrotti said he had attended the last two meetings of the UKWG. He said the UK government understands and shares the concerns described in the non-paper. He said that ISO 26000 was intended to be a guidance standard rather than a management standard. He said the objective of guidance standards is purely to raise awareness of an issue whereas management standards are very specific and are intended to mandate strict compliance. Pedrotti said that there were those who wanted ISO 26000 to go well beyond being a guidance standard, including a member of the drafting committee.

¶3. Pedrotti said that he is responsible for advising other UK government departments regarding developments on ISO 26000. He said he had just received the new working draft 4.2 of ISO 26000 that he would circulate through Whitehall to key contacts at all government departments. These key contacts will circulate the new draft within their departments and provide both policy and drafting guidance for the next meeting of the UKWG. The next international meeting to discuss ISO 26000 will be in Santiago, Chile next September, and it is this draft that will be discussed at that meeting. He said he would get in touch with the USG representative to discuss the shared concerns on ISO 26000 prior to the next ISO meeting in Santiago in September.

¶4. In addition to passing the non-paper to the UKWG and BERR, Econoff sent the non-paper on May 28 to contacts at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DIFID). Both DIFID and the FCO responded that they had no involvement in the ISO standards process and referred me to the government representative at BERR.

¶5. Econoff also passed the non-paper on May 28 to Monika Green who manages the UK working group on ISO 26000 (UKWG). Green works at the BSI Group, (formerly the British Standards Institute) the independent product testing and standards-setting organization in the UK. The UKWG is made up of representatives from each of the six identified and agreed stakeholder categories spelled out in reftel (industry, government, labor, consumers, NGOs, and Service Support Research and Others. Green would not identify any of the six UKWG members by name, but said the six stakeholder groups were represented as follows.

- Industry Precast Concrete Association
- Government Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)
- Labor Trade Union Council
- Consumers Private individual
- NGOs Private Individual
- SSRO Private Individual

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